

Frank Marks - NOAA Federal

From: Frank Marks - NOAA Federal
Sent: Monday, September 9, 2019 7:10 AM
To: Craig McLean - NOAA Federal
Cc: John Cortinas; Molly Baringer
Subject: Re: Hurricane Dorian and Exceptional Service

Thank you for addressing this critical issue clearly and with your normal candor. It is very important for those of us on the front line to feel that what we do makes a difference in warning the public and saving lives. Many NOAA folks put themselves in harms way and went above and beyond their normal roles to do that, working very long hours because we believe in what we do and the impact our efforts have on the outcome. So thank you for making sure those efforts are not wasted or abused.

On Monday, September 9, 2019, Craig McLean - NOAA Federal <craig.mclean@noaa.gov> wrote:
Dear Colleagues,

The fierce storm we know as Hurricane Dorian has concluded its ferocious path through the Bahamas and along the US East Coast. Many of you have contributed to the excellent science that has underpinned the forecasts and current understanding of storms such as this one, which accelerated quite rapidly in intensity. The storm also presented challenges in track which improved with enhanced observations. We know that our collective work, from the scientists in the aircraft penetrating the storm, to the scientists deploying the glider picket line, to the modelers and folks working the physics of the storms, across OAR and in our CI's, and across all NOAA Lines, we are working the problem in order to give the NWS forecasters the best tools we possibly can to keep America and our neighbors safe. Thank you.

During the course of the storm, as I am sure you are aware, there were routine and exceptional expert forecasts, the best possible, issued by the NWS Forecasters. These are remarkable colleagues of ours, who receive our products, use them well, and provide the benefit of their own experience in announcing accurate forecasts accompanied by the distinction of all credible scientists -- they sign their work. As I'm sure you also know, there was a complex issue involving the President commenting on the path of the hurricane. The NWS Forecaster(s) corrected any public misunderstanding in an expert and timely way, as they should. There followed, last Friday, an unsigned press release from "NOAA" that inappropriately and incorrectly contradicted the NWS forecaster. My understanding is that this intervention to contradict the forecaster was not based on science but on external factors including reputation and appearance, or simply put, political. Our NOAA Scientific Integrity Policy and Code of Scientific Conduct make clear that all NOAA employees shall approach all scientific activities with honesty, objectively, and completely, without allegiance to individuals, organizations, or ideology. The content of this press release is very concerning as it compromises the ability of NOAA to convey life-saving information necessary to avoid substantial and specific danger to public health and safety. If the public cannot trust our information, or we debase our forecaster's warnings and products, that specific danger arises.

You know that the value of our science is in the complexity of our understanding, our ability to convey that understanding to a wide audience of users of this information, and to establish and sustain the public trust in the truth and legitimacy of that information. Unfortunately, the press release of last Friday violated this trust and violated NOAA's policies of scientific integrity. In my role as Assistant Administrator for Research, and as I continue to administratively serve as Acting Chief Scientist, I am pursuing the potential

violations of our NOAA Administrative Order on Scientific Integrity. Thankfully, we have such policies that are independently cited as among the best in the federal community, if not the best. Your NOAA and OAR management and leadership team believes in these policies and principles. I have a responsibility to pursue these truths. I will.

Thank you for your continued excellent work, and your trust. Carry on.

Craig

--

Craig N. McLean
Assistant Administrator
Oceanic and Atmospheric Research
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
[1315 East West Highway](#)
[Silver Spring, MD 20910](#)
[Office:](#) 301-713-2458

--

The contents of this message are mine personally and do not necessarily reflect any position of NOAA.

Dr. Frank Marks, Director
NOAA/AOML Hurricane Research Division
4301 Rickenbacker Causeway, Miami, FL 33149
305-361-4321